

**Sample Parent Letter
During a School Norovirus Outbreak**

[Type Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

[Type LPHA name] and the Iowa Department of Public Health have been investigating reports of students and staff experiencing symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea at [Type school name]. These symptoms appear to be the result of an outbreak of norovirus.

Norovirus is a common cause of gastroenteritis in people. Symptoms usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramping. The symptoms of norovirus appear about 24 - 48 hours after swallowing the virus, with a range of 10 – 50 hours... The illness is usually brief, lasting only one to three days. This virus is most commonly spread by eating contaminated foods or liquids, touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then placing hands in mouth, or having direct contact with a person who is infected and showing symptoms. In order to prevent the spread of this virus in your home (and at school), follow these basic prevention strategies:

- Wash hands after using the toilet.
- Wash hands before handling food or ice.
- Wash hands before eating.
- Refrain from food handling duties if currently ill and for 3 days after diarrhea and vomiting have stopped.
- Discard foods that have been handled or prepared by someone who is or has recently had vomiting or diarrhea.
- Promptly clean and disinfect any surfaces that become soiled with vomit or diarrhea.
- Ill staff and children should remain at home until 24 hours after diarrhea and/or vomiting cease, or until stools are formed. Education on proper hand hygiene should be emphasized upon return to school.
- School staff that handle food and have norovirus infection who have had diarrhea and/or vomiting should be excluded until 3 days after the last bout of vomiting and/or diarrhea and are having formed stools.
- Students in diapers and have norovirus infection who have had diarrhea and/or vomiting should be excluded until 3 days after the last bout of vomiting and/or diarrhea and are having formed stools.

Measures are also being taken at the school to prevent further spread of the illness. For additional information about norovirus visit:

www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/DiseaseIndex.aspx?disease=Norovirus If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact or call [Type LPHA or IDPH name] at [Type agency phone number].

Sincerely,

[Type LPHA or IDPH name]
[Type job title]